LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM STUART JACKSON

I accept that government would like to address the imbalance of taxing those that can afford to educate their children privately. However, like private medical care there is a market for such a provision in our society. We also must accept that an increase in costs to the sector will mean less pupils are placed in the sector. Taxes on house sales would be pointless if no-one sold their house as a result. If the bottom line cost to educate a child in a state school is £6500 per annum the revenue gained by removing relief must be greater than the cost of placing these extra children in the state sector. Surely, a more robust system if it’s about government revenue is to increase income tax.

A complex topic I know but the risk of getting this wrong means extra pupils in an already overcrowded state sector who cannot miraculously accommodate an extra couple of dozen pupils. High Schools are tailored for a certain number of pupils and successful schools are already full. Has work been carried out on estimating which state schools will pick up the extra pupils? If so, I’d like to see it as I’m convinced there will be major holes as it will be based purely on guesses. Any plan based on such wild guesses will not be well received when it deviates from the planned path.

If rates relief being removed equals no extra pupils into the state sector then it’s a win for government. If it doesn’t, so what. There will only be certain schools that can take extra pupils and they probably won’t be in the right catchment areas. This will create unrest in all sectors of community which demonstrates how poorly this strategy has been thought through. I accept it’s a win to tax the independent sector and shout loudly about it. 96% of the population will be in favour but not when some can’t choose the school they want for their own children.